to (d) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Increasing demand of stainless steel in the country

252. SHRI S. NIRAKKULATHAN:
SHRI OS. MANIAN:

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) the quantum of increase of stainless steel consumption in the country during the last three years;

(b) wheth'er Government have any proposal to expand the Salem Steel Plant to meet the increasing demand of stainless steel in the country; and

(c) if so, whether any scheme has been worked out?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) to (c) According to a recent study, the estimated consumption of stainless steel in the country during the years 1993-94, 1994-95 and 1995-96 was as under.:—

(Unit: Lakh Tonnes)

Details	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Estimated stainless steel consumption in the country	5.0	5.34	6.06

Out of the above, only 70,000 tonne per year was the estimated consumption! in Salem Steel Plant's (SSP) production range. The balance was in the low nickel stainless steel form.

Since the demand in SSP's production range has not shown a significant increase in the last three years, there is no concrete proposal, at present, for expansion of SSP.

Import of Coal by Vizag Steel Plant

253. SHRI S. MUTHU MANI: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Vizag Steel Plant awarded a contract worth over Rs. 100 crore to an Australian Company for importing coal, without inviting global tender;

(b) if so, whether the coal being imported under the said contract is not as per the quality specifications stipulated by the Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) and no steel plant in the country has so far imported such quality of coal; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that Vizag Steel Plant authorities have flouted all tendering norms, quality standards and techno-economic feasibility parameters in awarding the said contract?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) to (c) Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (Visakhapatnam Steel Plant) entered into long term agreement in the year 1995 for a period of 3 years for import of coal from various sources in Australia in accordance with the terms and conditions and specifications of Low Ash Metallurgical Coking Coal approved by the Board of Directors of the Company. The quality and the prices of the Low Ash Metallurgical Coking Coal imported by Visakhapatnam Steel Plant are generally in line with the coal being procured by Steel Authority of India Ltd., (SAIL) and the Japanese Steel Mills.